OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

WASHINGTON 25, D.C.

January 30, 1964

Honorable J. Lee Rankin
General Counsel
The President's Commission
200 Maryland Avenue, Northeast
Washington, D. C. 20002

Dear Mr. Rankin:

Reference is made to your oral request of this Bureau on January 22, 1964, that appropriate officials of the Communist Party, USA, the Socialist Workers Party and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee be contacted officially by this Bureau and be requested, on behalf of the President's Commission, to make available copies of all correspondence and any other material that they might have relative to Lee Harvey Oswald.

On January 27, 1964, we contacted Mr. Vincent T. Lee, National Director, Fair Play for Cuba Committee, New York, New York, in this matter. Mr. Lee advised that his organization has no data concerning Oswald which has not already been furnished to this Bureau for forwarding to the President's Commission. The material furnished by Mr. Lee was described in report of Special Agent John James O'Flaherty dated December 11, 1963, at New York, New York, in the Lee Harvey Oswald investigation.

We also contacted Mr. Farrell Dobbs, National Secretary, Socialist Workers Party, New York, New York, on January 27, 1964, in the presence of his attorney, Mr. Rowland Watts. Mr. Dobbs declined to furnish information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation but stated that the Socialist Workers Party does have certain data concerning Oswald which had been turned over to Mr. Watts who would make this material available directly to the President's Commission.

Mr. Watts requested that he be sent a letter from Mr. J. Lee Rankin requesting material concerning Oswald in the possession of the Socialist Workers Party and he would then forward such material directly to the President's Commission. Mr. Watts stated this letter should be directed to Rowland Watts, President, Workers Defense League, 112 East 19th Street, New York, New York.

Mr. Watts and Mr. Dobbs described the material in the possession of the Socialist Workers Party concerning Oswald as follows:

1. A record of Oswald's subscription to the "Militant," the official Socialist Workers Party publication.

2. A letter from Oswald indicating his desire to join the Socialist Workers Party.

3. A letter from Oswald setting forth a change of address.

Mr. Watts stated that Oswald's request for membership in the Socialist Workers Party was answered routinely to the effect that since there was no Socialist Workers Party branch in Oswald's area, Oswald might desire to distribute the "Militant" in his home area.

Mr. Dobbs was informed by this Bureau that his request to deal directly with the President's Commission would be furnished to the Commission.

Mr. Arnold Johnson, Legislative Director of the Communist Party, USA, was interviewed on January 29, 1964, at the office of attorney John Abt and stated that the statement he made to the press to the effect he forwarded correspondence with Oswald to your Commission was made on the basis of his assumption that such correspondence, which he turned over to this Bureau, had in turn been forwarded to the Commission. Mr. Johnson stated he has no documents dealing with Lee Harvey Oswald in addition to the material previously furnished to this Bureau. The material referred to by Mr. Johnson is described in Special Agent O'Flaherty's reports dated December 6 and December 9, 1963, at New York, New York.

Honorable J. Lee Rankin

John Abt, on the occasion of our January 29, 1964, interview of Mr. Johnson, said that he was to be in contact with Gus Hall, General Secretary of the Communist Party, USA, and would arrange an interview of Hall as soon as possible. The results of our interview of Mr. Hall will be immediately brought to your attention upon receipt.

Sincerely yours,

J. Edgar Hoover